

Message Text

SECRET

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43

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 191615Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6231

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T CAIRO 11182

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ENRG IS EG US

SUBJ: AMOCO DRILLING ACTIVITIES IN GULF OF SUEZ

REF: (A) STATE 206125, B) TEL AVIV 5680, C) STATE 205464

D) CAIRO 11126

1. WE INFORMED CRAIG, AMOCO-EGYPT MANGER, OF CONTENTS
REFTEL A ABOUT MID-DAY CAIRO TIME AUGUST 19. IN RESPONSE,
CRAIG SAID THAT MARINER DRILLING IS JOINT AMOCO/GUPCO
(GUPCO IS JOINT AMOCO/EGYPTIAN GENERAL PETROLEUM CORPORATION OPERATIN
G

ENTITY IN EGYPT) OPERATION AND THAT DECISION HAD ALREADY BEEN
TAKEN WITH GUPCO TO PROCEED TO DRILL AT SITE 304-1. THIS
DECISION TAKEN ON BASIS THAT ONLY WAY FOR AMOCO TO PRESERVE
ITS EXPLORATION RIGHTS IN AREA IS TO EITHER FIND OIL BY SEPTEMBER
21 OR CLAIM IT CANNOT COMPLETE ITS EXPLORATION PROCESS BECAUSE
OF FORCE MAJEURE. BECAUSE AMOCO OBVIOUSLY CANNOT PASS ON TO GOE
ISRAELI OBJECTIONS TO EXPLORATION EXPRESSED TO USG AS
EVIDENCE OF FORCE MAJEURE, ONLY WAY TO PRESS CLAIM FOR
EXTENSION OF EXPLORATION RIGHTS IS TO ACTUALLY ENCOUNTER
ISRAELI INTERFERENCE. HE SAID THAT, BASED ON PREVIOUS
EXPERIENCE, WITH RAMADAN OPERATIONS, EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS
DO NOT BELIEVE ISRAELIS WILL INTERCEPT MARINER. CRAIG
SAID HE HAS LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO GO ALONG WITH JOINT GUPCO/
AMOCO DECISION FOR MARINER PROCEED TO SITE 304-1 AND
ATTEMPT TO DRILL.

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2. CRAIG ASKED SPECIFICALLY THAT THIS INFORMATION NOT BE PASSED TO ISRAELIS AT THIS TIME. HE PROMISED TO INFORM AMBASSADOR OF MARINER'S ACTUAL DEPARTURE FROM RAS SHUKAIR, PROBABLY SOMETIME AUGUST 20. DURING CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF. CRAIG REMINDED THAT AMOCO'S INTENT WAS NEVER TO REQUEST ISRAELI PERMISSION TO DRILL AT SITE 304-1 AND THAT, IN PASSING INFORMATION ABOUT MARINER'S ACTIVITIES TO GOI THROUGH USG, HE FULFILLING TO BEST OF HIS ABILITY OBLIGATION TO PROTECT LIVES AND PROPERTY OF AMERICAN CITIZENS. EMBOFF ASSURED HIM THAT INFORMATION HAD NOT BEEN PASSED TO GOI IN FORM OF REQUEST BUT IN FORM OF INFORMATION IN ORDER PROTECT AMERICAN LIVES AND PROPERTY.

4. COMMENT: AMOCO DECISION POSES INTERESTING PROBLEM. AMOCO CLEARLY FEELS IT IS ACTING WITHIN ITS RIGHTS IN PROCEEDING WITH SITE 304-1 DRILLING AND, AS WE UNDERSTAND USG POSITION, SUCH DRILLING WOULD ALSO BE CONSISTENT WITH OUR OWN VIEW ON LEGALITY SUCH ACTION. NEVERTHELESS, DESPITE OUR EFFORTS NOT TO REQUEST PERMISSION, ISRAELIS HAVE IN EFFECT DENIED PERMISSION. IN PROCEEDING TO SITE 304-1, AMOCO IS OF COURSE DOING SO AT ITS OWN RISK, ALTHOUGH OUR CONCERN FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE AMERICAN INTEREST, INVOLVED IS UNCHANGED. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, RECOMMEND WE INFORM GOI THAT ITS OBJECTION TO WORK AT SITE 304-1 HAS BEEN PASSED TO AMOCO, BUT THAT FOR CONTRACTUAL REASONS HAVING TO DO WITH IMMINENT LEASE EXPIRY AMOCO CONSIDERS IT MUST PROCEED WITH DRILLING OPERATION AS PLANNED. DESPITE DIFFERENCES ISRAELI AND USG VIEWS ON LEGAL ASPECTS, WE REQUEST ISRAELI NAVAL VESSELS BE INSTRUCTED NOT TO INTERFERE WITH THE PEACEFUL DRILLING ACTIVITY OF THIS VESSEL NOR TO JEOPARDIZE THE SAFETY OF THE AMERICANS ON BOARD. EILTS

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